JC07 Rec'd PCT/PTO 25 FEB 2002
10/070265

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 USC 371

International Application No.:	PCT/JP00/05751
International Filing Date:	August 25, 2000
Priority Date Claimed:	August 26, 1999
Title of Invention:	SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS AND RELATED CUSTOMER INFORMATION
Applicant(s) for DO/EO/US:	Kohei Nishiyama

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. (X) This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 USC 371.

2. (X) This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 USC 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 USC 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).

3.. (X) A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.

4.. (X) A copy of the International Application as filed (35 USC 371(c)(2))

   a) () is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
   b) (X) has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
   c) (X) a copy of Form PCT/1B/308 is enclosed.
   d) () is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).

5. (X) A translation of the International Application into English (35 USC 371(c)(2)).

6. (X) Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 USC 371(c)(3))

   a) () are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
   b) () have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
   c) () have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
   d) (X) have not been made and will not be made.

7. (X) **SIGNED** Declaration and Power of Attorney of the inventor (35 USC 371(c)(4)).

8. (X) An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.

9. (X) An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.

10. (X) A FIRST preliminary amendment.

11. (X) Drawing in twenty-three (23) pages.

12. (X) PCT Request Forms.

13. (X) PCT Forms PCT/IB/304 and 332.

14. (X) International Application as published - face sheet only.

15. (X) The present application qualifies for small entity status under 37 C.F.R. § 1.27.

16. (X) A return prepaid postcard.

17. (X) The following fees are submitted:

				FEES
	BASIC FEE			$890
CLAIMS	**NUMBER FILED**	**NUMBER EXTRA**	**RATE**	
Total Claims	12 - 20 =	0 ×	$18	$0
Independent Claims	5 - 3 =	2 ×	$84	$168
	TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS		$1,058	
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity (if applicable). Verified Small Entity statement must also be filed. (NOTE 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28)			$529	
	TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED			$529

18. (X) A check in the amount of $529.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

19. (X) Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). $40 per property.

20. (X) The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge only those additional fees which may be required, now or in the future, to avoid abandonment of the application, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Daniel Altman

Daniel E. Altman
Reg. No. 34,115
Customer No. 20,995

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25 FEB 2002

TOYAM86.001APC PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	:	Kohei NISHIYAMA	Group Art Unit Unknown
Int'l Appl. No.	:	PCT/JP00/05751	
Int'l Filing Date:		August 25, 2000	
For	:	SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS AND RELATED CUSTOMER INFORMATION	
Examiner	:	Unknown	

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

Preliminary to examination on the merits, please amend the above-captioned U.S. National Phase Application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Prior to the first line of the specification on page 1, please insert the following paragraph:

--This application is the U.S. National Phase under 35 U.S.C. §371 of International Application PCT/JP00/05751, filed August 25, 2000, which claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 11/239502, filed August 26, 1999. The International Application was published under PCT Article 21(2) in a language other than English.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 3-8 as follows:

1. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information, comprising:

Fundamental information presenting mechanism for presenting fundamental information concerning a commodity under development; and

Answer recording mechanism for receiving and recording an answer after said fundamental information is received.

3. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1, further comprising a commodity specification presenting mechanism for presenting, to an answerer, one of commodity specifications corresponding to the answer from the recipient of the fundamental information and commodity specification information related to a price.

4. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1, wherein the fundamental information concerning the commodity under development contains a menu prepared for each element of specifications of the commodity under development, which allows an answerer to return an answer indicating the desired commodity specifications through a selection from said menu.

5. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1, wherein the commodity specification information presented to the answerer contains a plurality of expected selling prices.

6. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1, wherein presentation of the information and reception of the answer are performed by utilizing a bidirectional communication system that uses a computer.

7. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 6, wherein the computer is provided with a commodity price calculating mechanism, which makes it possible to provide the answerer with a commodity price calculated on the basis of estimate information and a cumulative number of purchase candidates.

8. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 7,

wherein the commodity price calculating mechanism includes:

a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing the estimate information with an expected amount of sales obtained by multiplying the cumulative number of purchase candidates by their desired purchasing prices;

a function of, if it is not expected as a result of the comparison operation that an appropriate amount of profit will be generated, transmitting, to each purchase wishing person, a message showing that an expected amount of sales falls below a required amount and a message requesting the user to increase the desired purchasing prices; and

a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing an expected amount of sales calculated through the multiplication on the basis of the increased desired purchasing prices with an estimated price.

REMARKS

The claims have been amended to conform to U.S. practice by changing the multiple-dependent claims to single-dependent claims and changing the word "means" to "mechanism". As such, no new matter has been added. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE." Additionally, the cross-reference information has been included in the specification. Entry of the amendments is respectfully requested.

Should there be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: February 25, 2002 By: Daniel Altman

Daniel E. Altman
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 and 3-8 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information, comprising:

Fundamental information presenting ~~means~~mechanism for presenting fundamental information concerning a commodity under development; and

Answer recording ~~means~~mechanism for receiving and recording an answer after said fundamental information is received.

3. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, further comprising a commodity specification presenting ~~means~~mechanism for presenting, to an answerer, one of commodity specifications corresponding to the answer from the recipient of the fundamental information and commodity specification information related to a price.

4. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 3~~, wherein the fundamental information concerning the commodity under development contains a menu prepared for each element of specifications of the commodity under development, which allows an answerer to return an answer indicating the desired commodity specifications through a selection from said menu.

5. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 4~~, wherein the commodity specification information presented to the answerer contains a plurality of expected selling prices.

6. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein presentation of the information and reception of the answer are performed by utilizing a bidirectional communication system that uses a computer.

7. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 6, wherein the computer is provided with a commodity price calculating ~~means~~mechanism, which makes it possible to provide the answerer with a commodity price calculated on the basis of estimate information and a cumulative number of purchase candidates.

8. (Amended) A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 7,

wherein the commodity price calculating ~~means~~mechanism includes:

a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing the estimate information with an expected amount of sales obtained by multiplying the cumulative number of purchase candidates by their desired purchasing prices;

a function of, if it is not expected as a result of the comparison operation that an appropriate amount of profit will be generated, transmitting, to each purchase wishing person, a message showing that an expected amount of sales falls below a required amount and a message requesting the user to increase the desired purchasing prices; and

a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing an expected amount of sales calculated through the multiplication on the basis of the increased desired purchasing prices with an estimated price.

Replacement Page

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY "EXPRESS MAIL"

Attorney Docket No.	:	TOYAM86.001APC
Applicant(s)	:	Kohei Nishiyama
For	:	SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS AND RELATED CUSTOMER INFORMATION
Attorney	:	Daniel E. Altman/Katsuhiro Arai
"Express Mail" Mailing Label No.	:	EV 075311752 US
Date of Deposit	:	February 25, 2002

I hereby certify that the accompanying

Transmittal Sheet; English Translation of the Application in 48 pages; Drawing in 23 pages; Preliminary Amendment in 5 pages; **SIGNED** Declaration and Power of Attorney in 2 pages; Information Disclosure Statement, PTO Form 1449 with 4 references; Assignment; Recordation Form Cover Sheet in 3 pages; International Application as Published - face sheet only; PCT Request Form; PCT Forms PCT/IB/304, 308 and 332 $529.00 and $40.00 Checks for Patent Application and Assignment Filing Fees; Return Prepaid Postcard

are being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office To Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated above and are addressed to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 2327, Arlington, VA 22202.

Jose Colunga

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DESCRIPTION

SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS AND RELATED CUSTOMER INFORMATION

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information that are used to determine specifications and to grasp demand during development of a new commodity.

BACKGROUND ART

Conventionally, during development of a new commodity, a user layer, commodity specifications including a design, an appropriate price, and the like have been determined on the basis of data obtained by market research and the like conducted in advance.

This means that it is impossible to determine whether a development result (new commodity) will be accepted by the market before the commodity is actually put on sale. Therefore, there exists a high risk that it becomes impossible to recoup money invested in development and production if demand is erroneously forecasted.

Consequently, money invested in development of

commodities whose development ended in failure needs to be recovered by some hit commodities, so that commodities are priced higher than their values.

Also, with the conventional technique, commodities are sold after production on the basis of estimation, so that an advertisement cost, a sales cost, and a marketing cost run up and these costs are added to their prices. This results in a situation where commodities are further high priced.

Meanwhile, also on the user side, made-to-order commodities are expensive and it is unrealistic to purchase such commodities. Therefore, under present circumstances, users have no other choice but to purchase commodities developed by manufacturers on the basis of forecasts and they purchase and use, with tolerance, commodities whose specifications differ from those that they really want.

In order solve the technical problem, the present invention provides a technique with which specifications of a commodity and, in particular, design information of the commodity are presented to users through a network, and wishes of the users concerning the presented specifications are collected as information. Then, the final specifications of the commodity are determined and demand for the commodity is also grasped. This makes it possible to develop a commodity with as little risk as possible and to allow the user to

obtain a commodity having specifications that satisfy the user's wishes at a relatively low price.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

With the technique of the present invention, a system for developing commodity specifications and for collecting related customer information comprises: an information presenting means for presenting fundamental information concerning the design and the like of a commodity under development; and an answer recording means for receiving and recording an answer from a user to whom the fundamental information is presented.

Also, the answer as to the presented fundamental information from the user is at least one of an answer concerning commodity specifications desired by the user and an answer concerning a wish to purchase a commodity having the presented specifications.

Also, the system is added with a commodity specification presenting means for presenting, to an answerer (user), commodity specifications corresponding to the answer or commodity specification information related to a price.

Further, the fundamental information concerning the commodity under development contains a menu prepared for each element of the specifications of the commodity under

development, thereby allowing the answerer to return an answer indicating the desired commodity specifications through a selection from the menu. Also, the fundamental information or the commodity specification information presented to the answerer contains a plurality of expected selling prices.

The presentation of the information, the reception of the answer, and a recording means of the present invention are realized by a bidirectional communication system that uses a personal computer connected to a public communication network, such as the Internet.

In this case, a host computer functioning as a server is provided with a commodity price calculating means, thereby making it possible to provide the answerer (user terminal) with a commodity price calculated on the basis of estimate information and the cumulative number of purchase candidates.

It should be noted here that there may be employed a means that uses a telephone or a facsimile or may be employed a face-to-face system that uses a paper medium or the like.

Also, a commodity price determining means is constructed as follows, so that it is possible to determine a price in accordance with the strength of user's intention to purchase the commodity.

That is, the commodity price calculating means includes: a function of performing a comparison operation by

comparing the estimate information with an expected amount of sales obtained by multiplying the cumulative number of purchase candidates by their desired purchasing prices; a function of, if it is not expected as a result of the comparison operation that an appropriate amount of profit will be generated, transmitting, to each purchase wishing person, a message showing that an expected amount of sales falls below a required amount and a message requesting the user to increase the desired purchasing prices; and a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing an expected amount of sales calculated through the multiplication on the basis of the increased desired purchasing prices with an estimated price.

With the technique of the present invention, the production of a commodity is started after a reservation for the commodity is accepted. This makes it possible to reduce a risk concerning funds as little as possible, to develop a new commodity even with small funds, and to create a new market by a small-lot production of a variety of products.

It should be noted here that the commodity developed with the technique of the present invention includes intangible commodities provided by so-called service businesses, such as group tours, seminars, and insurances, in addition to tangible commodities, such as industrial goods.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic construction diagram showing a system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a flow chart showing processing of the embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a system construction diagram showing an idea presenting step of the embodiment.

FIG. 4 is a system construction diagram showing a provisional reservation step of the embodiment.

FIG. 5 is a system construction diagram showing a reservation step of the embodiment.

FIG. 6 is an explanatory diagram showing database constructions of a fundamental information recording file and an answer recording file of the embodiment.

FIG. 7 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of a commodity database of the embodiment.

FIG. 8 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of a contents database of the embodiment.

FIG. 9 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of a provisional estimate database of the embodiment.

FIG. 10 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of an estimate database of the embodiment.

FIG. 11 is an explanatory diagram (1) showing a

construction of a member database of the embodiment.

FIG. 12 is an explanatory diagram (2) showing the construction of the member database of the embodiment.

FIG. 13 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of a BBS database of the embodiment.

FIG. 14 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of a vote database of the embodiment.

FIG. 15 is an explanatory diagram showing a construction of a provisional reservation database of the embodiment.

FIG. 16 is an explanatory diagram (1) showing a construction of a reservation database of the embodiment.

FIG. 17 is an explanatory diagram (2) showing the construction of the reservation database of the embodiment.

FIG. 18 shows a commodity idea presenting screen displayed on a user's monitor in the embodiment.

FIG. 19 shows a membership registration screen displayed on the user's monitor in the embodiment.

FIG. 20 shows a BBS writing screen displayed on the user's monitor in the embodiment.

FIG. 21 shows a vote screen displayed on the user's monitor in the embodiment.

FIG. 22 shows a provisional reservation screen displayed on the user's monitor in the embodiment.

FIG. 23 shows a reservation screen displayed on the user's monitor in the embodiment.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

<First Embodiment>

An embodiment of the present invention will be described below by taking, as an example, development of a case for a mobile telephone.

This embodiment relates to an example of a case where a demand trend is confirmed and determined at a stage where specifications of a commodity are almost determined.

In FIG. 1, reference numeral 1 represents a host computer connected to the Internet and it is possible to access this server from user terminals, such as unspecified personal computers connected to a public communication network, such as the Internet.

The aforementioned host computer 1 includes a central processing unit (CPU) that is a main unit, a main memory (MM) connected via a bus, a hard disk device (HD), an input device (KBD), a display device (CRT), and a communication interface (I/F). The whole of this system is controlled by an OS (operating system), such as UNIX, LINUX, mainframe, Windows NT, or Windows 2000, installed on the hard disk device (HD).

Also, in the hard disk device (HD), there are

registered a fundamental information recording file 3, an answer recording file 4, and a control program.

The control program is temporarily read onto the main memory (MM) and is further executed in sequence by the central processing unit (CPU).

The main function of this control program is to provide fundamental information through the Internet and to receive and record answers.

In the aforementioned fundamental information recording file 3, information given below is registered as the fundamental information.

(1) Commodity Specifications

For instance, there are registered an item name (a mobile telephone case), a size, a plurality of design images (for instance, three types of designs "A", "B", and "C"), and a plurality of materials (for instance, two types of materials "X" and "Y") and the like.

(2) A plurality of expected prices (for instance, 1500 yen and 3000 yen)

(3) Profile of design developer

When access from a user terminal is performed by specifying the URL (uniform resource locator) of the host

computer 1, the fundamental information is displayed on a monitor screen of the user terminal (column 1 in FIG. 2). Here, an answerer (user) returns answers as to the following items and the answers are registered in the hard disk device (HD) of the host computer 1 by a CGI or the like.

During this operation, the user makes selections for the following items.

(1) Preferred design, material, and the like displayed on the monitor screen.

(2) The highest price, out of the plurality of expected prices displayed on the monitor screen, that the user thinks affordable. Whether the user will make a reservation for purchase or wishes to purchase the commodity (hereinafter, collectively referred to as the "purchase wish"). If the user does not wish to purchase the commodity, he/she answers as "not wishing to purchase" or terminates the connection to the host computer 1.

(3) Input attributes of the answerer (user) into attribute input fields (e-mail address, age, gender, address, hobby, magazine he/she purchases, and the like) displayed on the monitor screen.

These answers are recorded in the recording file 4 of the host computer 1 through the CGI (column 2 in FIG. 2).

The records are integrated with similar information (commodity specifications, such as a price, a size, a design, and a material) and are used to determine which item should be considered for commercialization (column 3 in FIG. 2).

Next, a procedure for determining which item should be considered for commercialization will be described below.

Each purchase wishing answerer (user) is a potential purchaser, so that the central processing unit (CPU) calculates the potential number of units to be sold by performing the following price determination.

In the case where 1000 units having the same specifications are produced, the expected price becomes 3000 yen. Also, in the case where 2000 units having the same specifications are produced, the expected price becomes 1500 yen. In the case where the aforementioned answer result shows that 1500 users wish to purchase the commodity at a price of 1500 yen and 500 users wish to purchase the commodity at a price of 3000 yen, 2000 users in total are expected to purchase the commodity at the price of 1500 yen (it is expected that each answerer whose desired price is 3000 yen will naturally purchase the commodity at the price of 1500 yen that is lower than their desired price, although it is preferable to obtain the final confirmation by e-mail,

facsimile, telephone, or the like as a precaution).

Consequently, there is obtained an expectation that it is possible to sell this commodity at the price of 1500 yen.

After the final quantity in demand is confirmed in this manner, the central processing unit (CPU) performs the final estimation (or issues a formal estimate in the case where the commodity will be manufactured by another manufacturer), and the price of the commodity is determined.

Under the same conditions as above, in the case where 1000 users wish to purchase the commodity at the price of 1500 yen and 500 users wish to purchase the commodity at the price of 3000 yen, the total number of purchase candidates is 1500. Therefore, it is possible to sell the commodity at a price between 1500 yen and 3000 yen.

Consequently, on the basis of the estimation, a unit price is calculated for the case where 1,500 units of the commodity are manufactured (it is preferable that this computation is performed by registering an estimate and a computation formula in the hard disk device (HD) of the host computer 1). Then, the calculated unit price is reported to each purchase wishing person whose desired price is 1500 yen by e-mail and receives an answer from him/her.

On the basis of this answer, the number of purchase candidates and a price are determined and the central

processing unit (CPU) determines whether the commodity should be put into production.

This makes it possible to obtain a reliable number of users and to set an appropriate selling price.

Under the same conditions as above, in the case where 1000 persons prefer a combination of the design type B and the material X and the number of persons who prefer each of other combinations of design types and materials is less than 500, if a judgment is made by limiting to the combination of the design type B and the material X, the selling price becomes 3000 yen and a result "production should be canceled" is obtained for each of the other combinations.

However, it is expected that some of the persons who prefer the other combinations will accept the combination of the design B and the material X. Therefore, there is made contact with answerers who selected the other combinations by e-mail or the like to seek an answer as to whether he/she wishes to purchase the commodity manufactured using the combination of B and X.

On the basis of this answer, the central processing unit (CPU) set the number of purchase candidates and a price and determines whether the commodity should be put into production.

This makes it possible to determine a reliable number

of users and to set an appropriate selling price.

With the technique of this embodiment, it becomes possible to grasp demand trend as a range instead of a point (meaning that there may be a case where answerers (users) whose desired price is 1500 yen will purchase the commodity at a price of 2000 yen, a case where persons who selected the design A will purchase the commodity having the design B, and a similar case). This makes it possible to appropriately set users and a price of the specifications of a commodity that should be commercialized.

Customer information, such as answerer's attributes and desired commodity, obtained by following the procedure described above is stored in the hard disk device (HD) of the host computer 1. The usage of this customer information is not limited to the development of the commodity that is presently under development. That is, it is possible to use this customer information as user information (fundamental information) for the development of other commodities.

<Second Embodiment>

The second embodiment of the present invention will be described below by taking, as an example, the development of a case for a mobile telephone.

In this second embodiment, the first embodiment

described above is combined with a unique price determining system.

The fundamental information recorded in the fundamental information recording file 3 is the same as that described in the first embodiment, although this information may contain only one expected price.

When the user terminal accesses the host computer 1 via the Internet, the fundamental information is transmitted and is displayed on the monitor of the computer 2 of the answerer (user) who has accessed the host computer 1 (column 1 in FIG. 2).

Here, the answerer (user) answers to items that are the same as those in the first embodiment. Then, the answers are transmitted to the host computer 1 and are recorded in the answer recording file 4 of the host computer 1 (column 2 in FIG. 2).

These records are integrated with similar information (commodity specifications, such as a price, a size, a design, and a material) and are used to determine which item should be considered for commercialization (column 3 in FIG. 2).

The item that should be considered for commercialization is determined by assuming the number of persons who made reservation for purchase, their desired prices, and an expected manufacturing cost. Even in the case

where the expected manufacturing cost exceeds an expected amount of sales calculated from the number of persons who made reservation for purchase and their desired prices, if the difference therebetween falls within an allowable range determined as appropriate, the item will be considered for commercialization.

After the item that should be considered for commercialization is determined, a manufacturer that should manufacture the commodity is selected by referring to a database in which there are recorded manufacturer's names, the feature of each manufacturer, criteria for estimate, the state of availability of each facility, the stock state of each raw material, and the like (it is preferable that information showing the state of availability of each facility and the stock state of each raw material is successively updated by directly accessing the host computer from each manufacturer). Then, estimate is issued (column 4 in FIG. 2). In addition, design and other specifications are determined by assuming that the commodity will be commercialized, and the commodity specifications and an estimated price are transmitted to persons who made reservation for purchase. Further, processing is made to make it possible for persons other than the persons who made reservation for purchase to freely get access over the Internet (column 5 in FIG. 2).

Each person who accesses information concerning the commodity specifications answers whether he/she wishes to purchase the commodity using his/her own user terminal, and this answer is recorded in the answer recording file 4 of the host computer 1 (column 6 in FIG. 2).

In the price determining system described above, a manufacturing cost (including a design cost and sales sundry expenses) is compared with the expected amount of sales obtained by multiplying the number of purchase candidates by the estimated price recorded in the answer recording file 4. If it is expected that an appropriate profit will be obtained, it is determined that the commodity should be commercialized. In addition, the estimated price is determined as the selling price, and information, which shows that it is determined to commercialize the commodity, and price information are transmitted and presented to the purchase candidates (column 7 in FIG. 2).

In the above description, in the case where it is found, from the expected amount of sales, that it is impossible to obtain an appropriate profit, a message showing this situation is transmitted to the purchase candidates by e-mail or the like to find purchase candidates who wish to purchase the commodity at a price higher than the estimated price.

During this operation, as necessary, there is presented

data showing the amount of money that is additionally required, the number of purchase candidates, and the like. Each purchase wishing person presents the amount of money that he/she will additionally spend by referring to this data.

Each person, who wishes to purchase the commodity even if the commodity is priced higher than the estimated price, answers the amount of money that he/she will spend, and this answered amount of money is recorded in the answer recording file 4 of the host computer 1. Note that each purchase wishing person, who will not spend money exceeding the estimated price, reports this fact to the host computer 1.

In the price determining system, on the basis of the program stored in the hard disk device (HD), the central processing unit (CPU) calculates how degree the amount of sales is increased by the answerers who are willing to spend money exceeding the estimated amount of money. If it is expected that a profit will be obtained as a result of this increase in the expected amount of sales, information, which shows that it is determined to commercialize the commodity, and price information are sent to the purchase candidates by e-mail (column 7 in FIG. 2).

Here, it is assumed that different prices are set for respective purchase candidates during this operation. That is, purchase candidates (users) who did not present prices higher

than the estimated price is capable of purchasing the commodity at the estimated price, while each purchase wishing person who presented an increased price will purchase the commodity at the increased price that they presented.

It should be noted here that if judging that it is impossible to obtain a profit even in accordance with the procedure described above, the central processing unit (CPU) will abandon the commercialization of the commodity.

After the amount of money that each purchase wishing person should spend is determined in accordance with the procedure described above, the central processing unit (CPU) reconfirms the intention of the user (user terminal) to purchase the commodity by e-mail. After a payment is made, the commodity is dispatched (there may be a case where the commodity is manufactured after the payment is made) (column 9 in FIG. 2).

This price determining system allows each user to purchase the commodity at a price determined in accordance with the strength of his/her intention to purchase the commodity.

It is expected that each user whose purchase intention is weak does not present a purchasing price that is higher than the estimated price. If the number of such users is large, there exists a high possibility that the specifications will

not be commercialized.

On the other hand, it is expected that each user whose purchase intention is strong will present an increased price that is determined in accordance with the strength of the purchase intention. If the number of such users is large, there exists a high potential that the specifications will be commercialized.

That is, each user whose purchase intention is weak must bear a risk that the specifications are not commercialized and it becomes impossible to obtain the commodity. On the other hand, there is expected a merit that if the commodity is commercialized, he/she is capable of purchasing the commodity at a low price.

Each user whose purchase intention is conversely strong can enjoy a merit that there is maintained a high possibility that the specifications will be commercialized, but needs to bear a risk that he/she is forced to purchase the commodity at a high price.

Although at least one expected price is presented as the fundamental information in the embodiment described above, a free answer may be obtained from each answerer without presenting such price.

It is thought that this price determination is preferable in view of customer satisfaction (each customer

having a strong purchase intention will purchase the commodity with satisfaction even at a high price). As a result, there is promoted the individualized commercialization that has been impossible to realize with a conventional uniformly pricing system.

It is possible to implement the price determining system described above by departing the price determination from the development of commodity specifications. That is, commodity specifications including a design and the like are determined by assuming a commodity with an arbitrary method, the determined commodity specifications (column 5 in FIG. 2) are presented from the host computer 1 as the fundamental information, there are found purchase candidates, and a price is determined using the price determining system.

<Third Embodiment>

The third embodiment of the present invention will be described below by taking, as an example, the development of a case for a mobile telephone.

This third embodiment relates to an example of a case where demand trend is confirmed and commodity specifications are determined at a stage where the commodity specifications contain many undetermined elements.

The construction of a system in this embodiment is the

same as those in the aforementioned first and second embodiments and the following information is recorded in the fundamental information recording file 3 as the fundamental information.

(1) Specification Menu for Each Element

For instance,

{1} Size menu corresponding to the model of the mobile telephone

{2} Image menu for the overall shape

{3} Image menu for detailed shapes like a strap shape

{4} Color menu

{5} Material menu

(2) Keyword Menu Expressing Commodity Image Using Language

Example expressions are "a round and cute impression", "a tough and wild impression", and "a simple impression".

As to this keyword menu, the specification concerning each element described above is related to a menu. When a keyword is selected, an image of the overall shape corresponding to this keyword is retrieved. In more detail, image data is grouped with respect to respective commodity images and it is possible to select the image data.

(3) Estimate Data as Necessary

Step 1 to step 4 described below will be repeated in accordance with the exchange of information between columns 1 and 2 in FIG. 2.

(Step 1)

When a computer 2 functioning as the user terminal accesses the host computer 1, a screen requesting the answerer to input his/her attributes is displayed on a monitor of the computer 2.

After the answers are recorded in the answer recording file 4 of the host computer, a screen requesting to select one of "keyword search" and "element selection" is displayed on the monitor of the computer 2 of the answerer (user).

Here, if the "keyword search" is selected, a keyword menu is transmitted to the answerer's (user's) computer 2 and the processing proceeds to step 2.

If the "element selection" is selected, an element menu is displayed on the monitor of the answerer's (user's) computer and the processing proceeds to step 3.

(Step 2)

The keyword menu transmitted from the host computer 1 is displayed on the monitor of the answerer's (user's)

computer 2 and the answerer (user) selects a keyword matching his/her image and transmits the selected keyword to the host computer 1. This answer is recorded in the answer recording file 4 and the host computer 1 searches for an image of the overall shape corresponding to the selected keyword and transmits the image to the answerer (user).

The answerer (user) views the image displayed on the monitor and, if the displayed design completely differs from his/her image, the processing returns to step 1, in which the answerer performs the keyword selection again.

If the answerer hopes to make amendments to some extent, the processing proceeds to step 3. On the other hand, if there is no need to make amendments, the processing proceeds to step 4.

It is possible for the answerer to freely express the answer described above using a language. In this case, the answer is analyzed by a language analyzing software installed on the host computer and a corresponding image is retrieved.

(Step 3)

In step 3, the answerer selects a specification for each element from the menu in accordance with his/her preference and determines desired specifications of the commodity. In the case where "element selection" is selected

in step 1, the processing proceeds to step 3 by bypassing step 2.

A case where a design retrieved as corresponding to the keyword selected in step 2 is amended will be mainly described below.

When an instruction to proceed to step 3 is inputted into the host computer 1, the element menu is outputted from the host computer 1 and this menu is displayed on the monitor of the answerer's (user's) computer 2.

That is, in the case where the answerer (user) selects the "detailed shape", a plurality of pieces of image data concerning the detailed shapes are displayed. In the case where the "color" is selected, a color palette is displayed.

Under this condition, the answerer (user) selects an image, a color, and the like matching his/her preference and returns these answers. Then, the answers are recorded in the answer recording file 4 of the host computer 1.

After the answerer (user) finishes answering (selection) concerning every element that he/she hopes to make amendments, he/she transmits a signal indicating that "selection is finished" from the computer 2 to the host computer 1.

On receiving the signal indicating that the selection is finished, the host computer 1 creates an image showing the

overall shape of the commodity on the basis of each selected element, returns the image to the answerer's computer 2, and has the monitor display the image.

Although the image is processed by an image processing program installed on the hard disk device (HD) of the host computer 1, it is preferable that there is obtained a construction where it is possible to create and transmit three-dimensional data as well as two-dimensional data.

The answerer (user) checks the image data on the monitor of the computer 2. If the answerer is satisfied with this image, the processing proceeds to step 4. On the other hand, if the answerer hopes to make amendments, the amendment operation in step 3 is continued.

When a signal instructing to proceed to step 4 is inputted into the host computer 1, a message, which requests to input a desired purchasing price and an answer as to whether the answerer has an intention to purchase the commodity, is transmitted from the host computer 1 to the computer 2, and is displayed on the monitor of the answerer's (user's) computer 2.

The purchase wishing person inputs his/her desired price from the computer 2 and transmits the price to the host computer 1. In the host computer 1, answer data showing this desired price is recorded in the recording file 4.

(Step 5)

In the host computer 1, the central processing unit (CPU) checks the answer data of the desired price against the estimate information and data showing the cumulative number of purchase candidates, calculates the number of purchasers, which is required to make it possible to sell the commodity at the price desired by the answerers, and a price that would be set in the case where the commodity is commercialized at the current number of purchase candidates. Then, each answerer (user) is informed of the calculation results (a form that is different from the second embodiment of the price determining system in FIG. 2).

The operations from step 1 that are performed in sequence may be terminated at step 4 and step 5 may be performed on a different occasion to transmit the calculation results from the host computer to the e-mail address of each answerer.

By the operations described above, there are obtained commodity specifications of a commodity under development (for instance, a case for a mobile telephone), user's wishes concerning a price, and a list of potential customers. All of the information is stored in the hard disk device (HD) of the host computer 1.

It should be noted here that as to the desired price, in the example described above, each answerer inputs an arbitrary price. However, like in the first embodiment, a plurality of expected prices may be presented from the host computer 1 and each answerer may select his/her desired purchasing price therefrom.

With data obtained by requesting to input an arbitrary desired price or by receiving a selection of desired one from a plurality of expected prices, there is obtained data showing a correspondence between prices and demand. This makes it possible to set an appropriate price and to precisely forecast demand.

The central processing unit (CPU) determines the commodity specifications and a price, which are expected to generate a profit, on the basis of this data, and informs each answerer of the determined specifications and price.

Also, in the case where a user strongly wishes to purchase a commodity whose specifications differ from those of the determined commodity, the following procedure may be carried out. Data showing the specifications is stored in the host computer 1 so that it is possible to access the data via the Internet, thereby making it possible to find persons who wish to purchase the commodity having the specifications. Here, if there are found a predetermined number of purchase

candidates, the commodity having the specifications is commercialized.

In the above embodiment, the commodity under development is a mobile telephone. In addition, as to concrete commodity specifications such as the size, overall shape, detailed shapes, color, and material corresponding to the model of the mobile telephone, a plurality of ideas are created in advance, are recorded as fundamental information, and are transmitted. However, as to the initial fundamental information, only "the name of an item under development" may be transmitted as the commodity specifications to request answerers to freely answer their opinions concerning the commodity under development, and the answers are recorded in the answer recording means. This process is also included in the scope of the present invention.

In this case, the answers are analyzed and a plurality of ideas concerning concrete commodity specifications, such as the overall shape and detailed shapes, are created on the basis of the answers. Following this, the operation in the aforementioned first embodiment is performed. Alternatively, steps in the aforementioned second embodiment are performed.

There may be found purchase candidates by determining the final commodity specifications on the basis of the answers. In this case, there may be used two procedures given below.

(First)

The host computer 1 presents commodity specifications and a price, which have been finally determined as fundamental information, to ask recipients (users) shown by the fundamental information whether they wish to purchase the commodity. Then, the answers are recorded in the answer recording file 4.

When the number of purchase candidates reaches a number corresponding to a set price, the commodity is manufactured and sold.

(Second)

The finally determined commodity specifications and a plurality of candidate prices (for instance, 1000 yen, 2000 yen, and 3000 yen) are presented as fundamental information to collect answers as to whether each user wishes to purchase the commodity and to ask each user to select a desired purchasing price. The answers are recorded in the answer recording file 4. The method of utilizing these answers is the same as the answer utilizing method described in the first embodiment.

It should be noted here that a desired price may be freely answered by each answerer.

In the above embodiment, the system of the present

invention may be used to develop a commodity at a stage where which item should be developed has been determined or the development item itself has been determined on the basis of opinions collected from answerers. An example of a procedure carried out in this case is described below.

(Step 1)

When attribute information of an answerer is registered, there are registered his/her hobby, design taste, and desired commodity. For instance, there is registered a text "Mr. A lives alone, prefers commodities having a sharp design, and is currently looking for a facsimile having a sharp design".

(Step 2)

Registrants, out of a plurality of registrants, who have similar tastes and are looking for the same commodity, are classified into the same group (grouping in accordance with a common purpose function).

(Step 3)

A message, which shows that there exist members having the same taste, and an expected price of a commodity calculated on the basis of the current number of group members are reported to members constituting the same group (by e-mail,

facsimile, telephone, or the like).

At this stage, the processing may proceed to the procedure in the aforementioned first to third embodiments. However, the processing may alternatively proceed to the following step.

(Step 4)

A community is formed by the members on a home page to collect answers concerning a price. Then, in the case where the expected price falls within an allowable range, commodity specifications are determined and a commodity is manufactured and sold. The procedure for determining the commodity specifications in this case is the same as that described in the first embodiment or the third embodiment.

In the case where the expected price exceeds the allowable range, the processing waits for the number of group members to be increased. Then, when there is obtained an appropriate price, the processing proceeds to the determination of the commodity specifications.

In the three embodiments described above, there has been described, as an example, the determination of commodity specifications of a mobile telephone case that is an industrial product. However, specifications of a service commodity may be set by following a procedure that is

fundamentally the same as that described above.

For instance, in the case where a travel commodity is developed, the destination, the number of travel days, sightseeing spots, the hotel for stay, foods, and the like may be determined as specification elements. A plurality of menus are prepared for respective elements to make it possible for each answerer to make selections.

In accordance with the present invention, there are presented candidates for commodity specifications before the commodity specifications are determined, thereby collecting answers. Following this, the commodity specifications, price, the number of units to be manufactured, and the like can be determined.

Accordingly, it is possible to grasp the minimum number of units to be sold before the commodity is put on sale. Also, it is possible to determine the price in accordance with the grasped number (that is, it is possible to obtain a commodity whose commodity specifications and price are suited for preferences of users). This makes it possible to significantly reduce a risk involved in commodity development.

Also, with the list of potential customers, it is possible to precisely calculate the minimum number of lots to be produced (appropriate number of produced lots) and to dispatch, to customers, products immediately after production

without stocking them. Therefore, there is no need for a manufacturer to bear a cost to stock the products. Further, if a deposit is collected from the potential customers in advance when it is determined to start production, it is also possible to reduce a load concerning financing.

As a result, with this system, a risk involved in the production of small lots of a variety of products can be reduced. In addition, it is possible to reduce a risk involved in the development of a new commodity by medium and small-sized businesses that are subjected to a considerable risk during the development of a commodity. As a result, it is expected that the development of new commodities will be invigorated.

Further, the commodity development is performed while keeping customers in advance, so that it is not required to expend an advertisement and commercial cost and a sales cost and it is not required to increase a price in view of a risk. As a result, it becomes possible to sell the commodity at a price that is close to a manufacturing cost.

Also, users are not forced to purchase ready-made commodities provided by manufacturers. That is, they are capable of obtaining commodities that are closer to their preferences at relatively low prices.

As described above, with this system, concrete

commodity specifications and a price wished by users and purchase candidates are obtained as information, the final specifications and price are determined with reference to the obtained information, and the commodity is commercialized. As a result, it becomes possible to reduce a risk involved in commodity development as little as possible.

Consequently, in an industrial community that cannot cope with the need to produce small lots of a variety of products because it is impossible to precisely grasp user's needs although it is desired to shift from the mass manufacturing of one type of product to the production of small lots of a variety of products because of the increase of the variety of user's needs, this system is extremely beneficial because the system makes it possible to produce small lots of a variety of products at a small risk.

Also, customer information collected with this system for the development of a commodity is also effectively used as development data for other commodities.

<Fourth Embodiment>

FIG. 3 to FIG. 5 illustrate the aforementioned first to third embodiments in more detail. As described above in each embodiment, the computer 2 is connected to the host computer 1 via the Internet.

Among these drawings, FIG. 3 shows processing illustrating the presentation of ideas from the host computer 1.

The host computer 1 has the fundamental information recording file 3 and the answer recording file 4 and it is possible to update each of these files via a console 5 (step 301).

Next, a user accesses the host computer 1 from the computer 2 by specifying a URL (302).

The central processing unit of the host computer 1 automatically generates a Web page describing ideas of a commodity from the fundamental information recording file 3 (303).

The user refers to the page describing the commodity ideas (304). A screen showing this page is shown in FIG. 18.

Here, if having not yet performed membership registration, the user performs membership information registration before writing opinions and the like about the commodity ideas into a BBS (305). A screen, through which the user performs the membership registration, is shown in FIG. 19, while a screen, through which the user writes the opinions and the like into the BBS, is shown in FIG. 20.

Also, it is possible for the user to vote for a commodity that he/she prefers. A screen, through which the

user votes for the commodity, is shown in FIG. 21.

The central processing unit of the host computer 1 updates the answer recording file 4 on the basis of the attributes of users, who have not yet done membership registration, and the contents written into the BBS. Also, the answer recording file 4 may be updated using vote results (306).

It is possible for a host to refer to opinions about the commodity ideas and a current vote situation via the console 5 (307).

The host then updates the fundamental information recording file 3 using an idea, in which user's opinions have been incorporated (308).

Steps 302 to 308 described above are repeated to determine the specifications of a commodity.

FIG. 4 shows a procedure for making a provisional reservation.

The host writes a provisional estimate information, which concerns the manufacturing of a product and has been obtained from a manufacturer on the basis of the commodity idea specifications, into the fundamental information recording file 3 of the host computer 1 via the console 5 (401).

The user accesses the host computer 1 from the computer

2 via the Internet (402).

The central processing unit of the host computer 1 automatically generates a Web page, in which the commodity is shown with a plurality of prices expected for respective lots, from the fundamental information recording file 3 (403).

The user views the Web page generated in this manner using the monitor of the computer 2 (404).

The user makes a provisional reservation by selecting a desired purchasing price using the computer 2 (405). A screen, through which the provisional reservation is made in this step, is shown in FIG. 22.

The central processing unit (CPU) of the host computer 1 updates the answer recording file 4 using the contents of the provisional reservation (406).

Next, the central processing unit (CPU) of the host computer 1 creates a taste database from the answer recording file 4 by grouping members having the same taste (407).

Next, demand is forecasted and an expected selling price is calculated from the answer recording file 4. Then, potential purchase wishing members corresponding to the expected selling price (408) are extracted.

Then, finally, an e-mail giving purchase information that presents a current price is generated and sent to each member (409).

The precision of demand forecast is improved and the commodity price is determined by repeating steps 402 to 409 described above.

FIG. 5 shows a procedure for making a final reservation.

The host writes estimate information, that concerns the manufacturing of the commodity and has been obtained from a manufacturer on the basis of the commodity specifications, into the fundamental information recording file 3 of the host computer 1 via the console 5 (501).

Next, the central processing unit (CPU) of the host computer 1 extracts purchase candidates from the answer recording file 4 (502).

Next, the central processing unit (CPU) of the host computer 1 generates a purchase information mail, which presents the commodity specifications and an estimated price, and delivers the mail to each member (503).

Next, the user accesses the host computer 1 from the computer 2 via the Internet (504).

In response to this access, the central processing unit (CPU) automatically generates a Web page, in which the commodity is shown with a selling price, from the fundamental information recording file 3 (505).

The user knows the selling price by viewing the Web page generated in the aforementioned step using the monitor of

the computer 2 (506).

Then, the user performs reservation processing using the computer 2 in the case where he/she agrees with the presented selling price (507). A screen, through which the reservation processing is performed in this step, is shown in FIG. 23.

When the reservation processing is performed, the central processing unit of the host computer 1 updates the answer recording file 4 using the contents of the reservation described above (508).

FIG. 6 shows the contents of the fundamental information recording file 3 and the answer recording file 4 of the host computer.

As shown in this drawing, the fundamental information recording file 3 includes a commodity database, a contents database, a provisional estimate database, and an estimate database.

On the other hand, the answer recording file 4 includes a member database, a BBS database, a vote database, a provisional reservation database, a reservation database, and a taste database.

FIG. 7 shows item names, attributes, and sample values registered in the commodity database in the fundamental information recording file 3.

Similarly, FIG. 8 shows the contents of the contents database, FIG. 9 shows the contents of the provisional estimate database, and FIG. 10 shows the contents of the estimate database.

On the other hand, FIGS. 11 to 17 each show the contents of the databases in the answer recording file 4. In more detail, FIGS. 11 and 12 each show the contents of the member database, FIG. 13 shows the contents of the BBS database, FIG. 14 shows the contents of the vote database, FIG. 15 shows the contents of the provisional reservation database, and FIGS. 16 and 17 each show the contents of the reservation database.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The present invention is used for the planning of a commodity via a network and is also applicable to the development of a travel commodity.

CLAIMS

1. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information, comprising:

Fundamental information presenting means for presenting fundamental information concerning a commodity under development; and

Answer recording means for receiving and recording an answer after said fundamental information is received.

2. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1, wherein the answer from a recipient of the fundamental information is at least one of an answer concerning desired commodity specifications and an answer concerning a wish to purchase a commodity having said presented specifications.

3. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising a commodity specification presenting means for presenting, to an answerer, one of commodity specifications corresponding to the answer from the recipient of the fundamental information and commodity specification information related to a price.

4. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the fundamental information concerning the commodity under development contains a menu prepared for each element of specifications of the commodity under development, which allows an answerer to return an answer indicating the desired commodity specifications through a selection from said menu.

5. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the commodity specification information presented to the answerer contains a plurality of expected selling prices.

6. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein presentation of the information and reception of the answer are performed by utilizing a bidirectional communication system that uses a computer.

7. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 6, wherein the

computer is provided with a commodity price calculating means, which makes it possible to provide the answerer with a commodity price calculated on the basis of estimate information and a cumulative number of purchase candidates.

8. A system for collecting commodity specifications and related customer information according to claim 7,

wherein the commodity price calculating means includes:

a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing the estimate information with an expected amount of sales obtained by multiplying the cumulative number of purchase candidates by their desired purchasing prices;

a function of, if it is not expected as a result of the comparison operation that an appropriate amount of profit will be generated, transmitting, to each purchase wishing person, a message showing that an expected amount of sales falls below a required amount and a message requesting the user to increase the desired purchasing prices; and

a function of performing a comparison operation by comparing an expected amount of sales calculated through the multiplication on the basis of the increased desired purchasing prices with an estimated price.

9. A commodity plan idea presenting method which is

applied to a server of a proposal type that is connected to a network and is accessible from a plurality of user terminals, comprising the following steps of:

writing a commodity idea into a fundamental information recording file as specifications and image information;

generating a Web page from said written specifications and image information;

arranging the generated Web page so that the Web page is accessible from the plurality of user terminals;

receiving, from said plurality of user terminals, votes concerning the specifications and image information displayed on said Web page; and

registering vote results in an answer recording file.

10. A method of making a reservation for a commodity over a network, which is applied to a reservation server that is connected to a network and is accessible from a plurality of user terminals, the method comprising the following steps of:

generating a Web page from commodity specifications, image information, and a price for each lot read from a fundamental information file;

arranging the generated Web page so that the Web page is accessible from the plurality of user terminals;

receiving, from said plurality of user terminals,

provisional reservations including desired purchasing prices that are determined by referring to the specifications, image information, and price displayed on said Web page;

registering each said provisional reservation in the answer recording file; and

calculating demand forecast and a planned selling price from said answer recording file, and sending purchase information to each person having made a provisional reservation by answering said desired purchasing price that satisfies a condition of said planned selling price.

11. A computer-readable recording medium which is applied to a server of a proposal type that is connected to a network and is accessible from a plurality of user terminals, and which records a program comprising the following steps of:

writing a commodity idea into a fundamental information recording file as specifications and image information;

generating a Web page from the written specifications and image information;

arranging the generated Web page so that the Web page is accessible from the plurality of user terminals;

receiving, from said plurality of user terminals, votes concerning the specifications and image information displayed on said Web page; and

registering vote results in an answer recording file.

12. A computer-readable recording medium which is applied to a reservation server that is connected to a network and is accessible from a plurality of user terminals, and which records a program comprising the following steps of:

generating a Web page from commodity specifications, image information, and a price for each lot read from a fundamental information file;

arranging the generated Web page so that the Web page is accessible from the plurality of user terminals;

receiving, from said plurality of user terminals, provisional reservations including desired purchasing prices that are determined by referring to the specifications, image information, and price displayed on said Web page;

registering each said provisional reservation in the answer recording file; and

calculating demand forecast and a planned selling price from said answer recording file, and sending purchase information to each person having made a provisional reservation by answering said desired purchasing price that satisfies a condition of said planned selling price.

ABSTRACT

A commodity idea of a proposal type is presented to users via a network, and wishes of the users concerning commodity specifications are collected as information. Then, the final product specifications are determined and the demand for the commodity is grasped. This makes it possible to develop a commodity with as little risk as possible and to allow the users to obtain a commodity having specifications that satisfy the user's wishes at a relatively low price.

Japio-GPG/FX

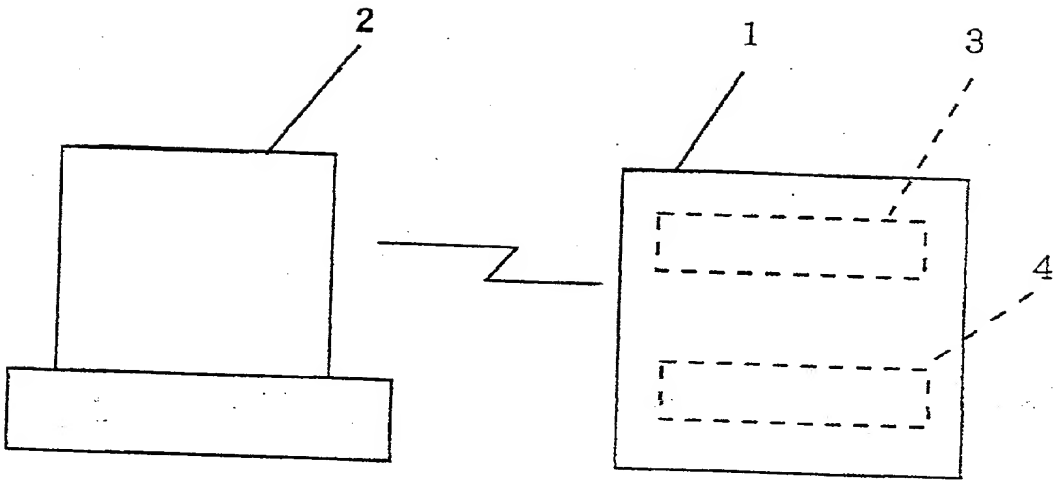


FIG. 1

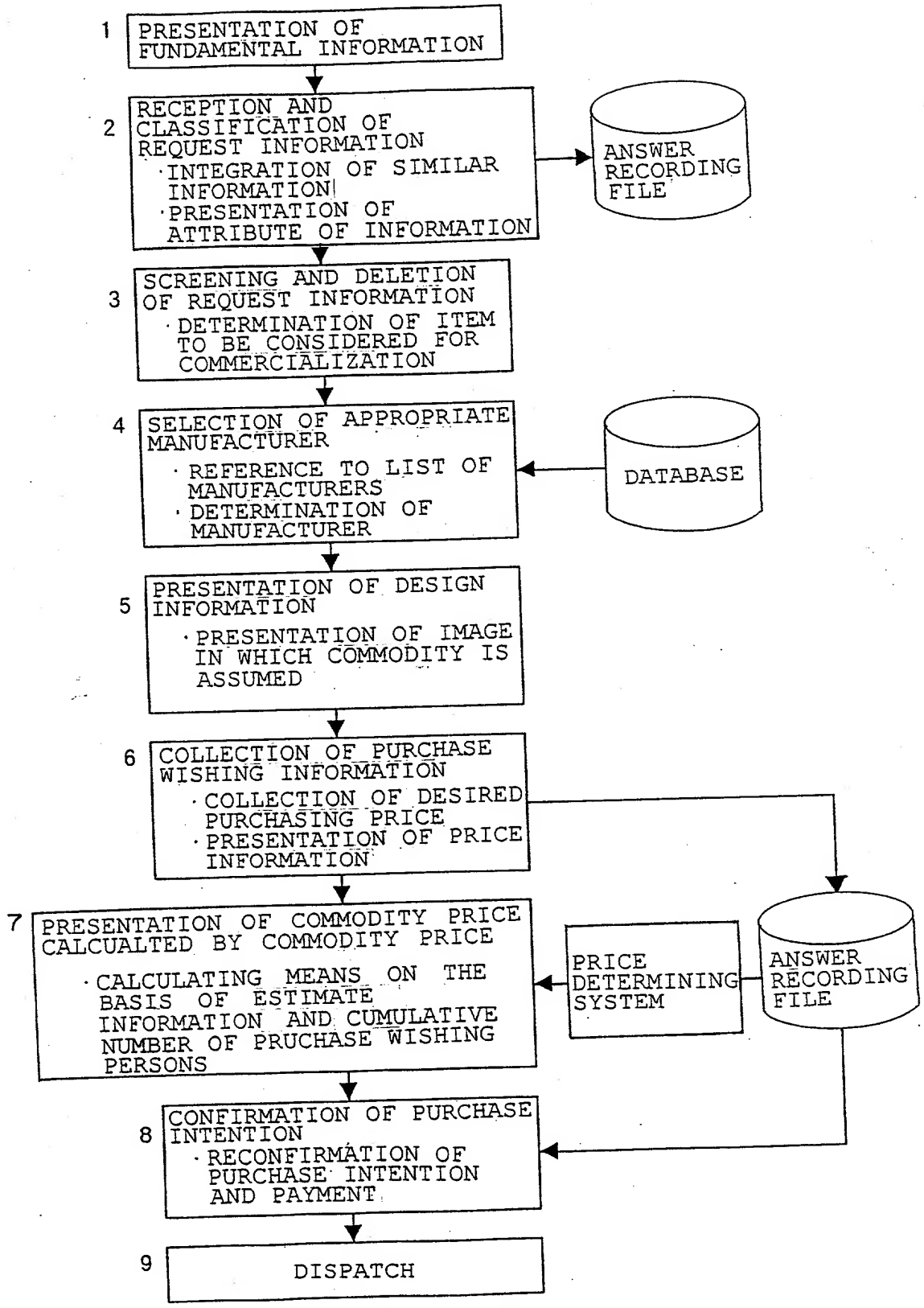

1
PRESENTATION OF FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION
2
RECEPTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF REQUEST INFORMATION
·INTEGRATION OF SIMILAR INFORMATION
·PRESENTATION OF ATTRIBUTE OF INFORMATION
ANSWER RECORDING FILE
3
SCREENING AND DELETION OF REQUEST INFORMATION
·DETERMINATION OF ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED FOR COMMERCIALIZATION
4
SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE MANUFACTURER
·REFERENCE TO LIST OF MANUFACTURERS
·DETERMINATION OF MANUFACTURER
DATABASE
5
PRESENTATION OF DESIGN INFORMATION
·PRESENTATION OF IMAGE IN WHICH COMMODITY IS ASSUMED
6
COLLECTION OF PURCHASE WISHING INFORMATION
·COLLECTION OF DESIRED PURCHASING PRICE
·PRESENTATION OF PRICE INFORMATION
7
PRESENTATION OF COMMODITY PRICE CALCUALTED BY COMMODITY PRICE
·CALCULATING MEANS ON THE BASIS OF ESTIMATE INFORMATION AND CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF PRUCHASE WISHING PERSONS
PRICE DETERMINING SYSTEM
ANSWER RECORDING FILE
8
CONFIRMATION OF PURCHASE INTENTION
·RECONFIRMATION OF PURCHASE INTENTION AND PAYMENT
9
DISPATCH

FIG. 2

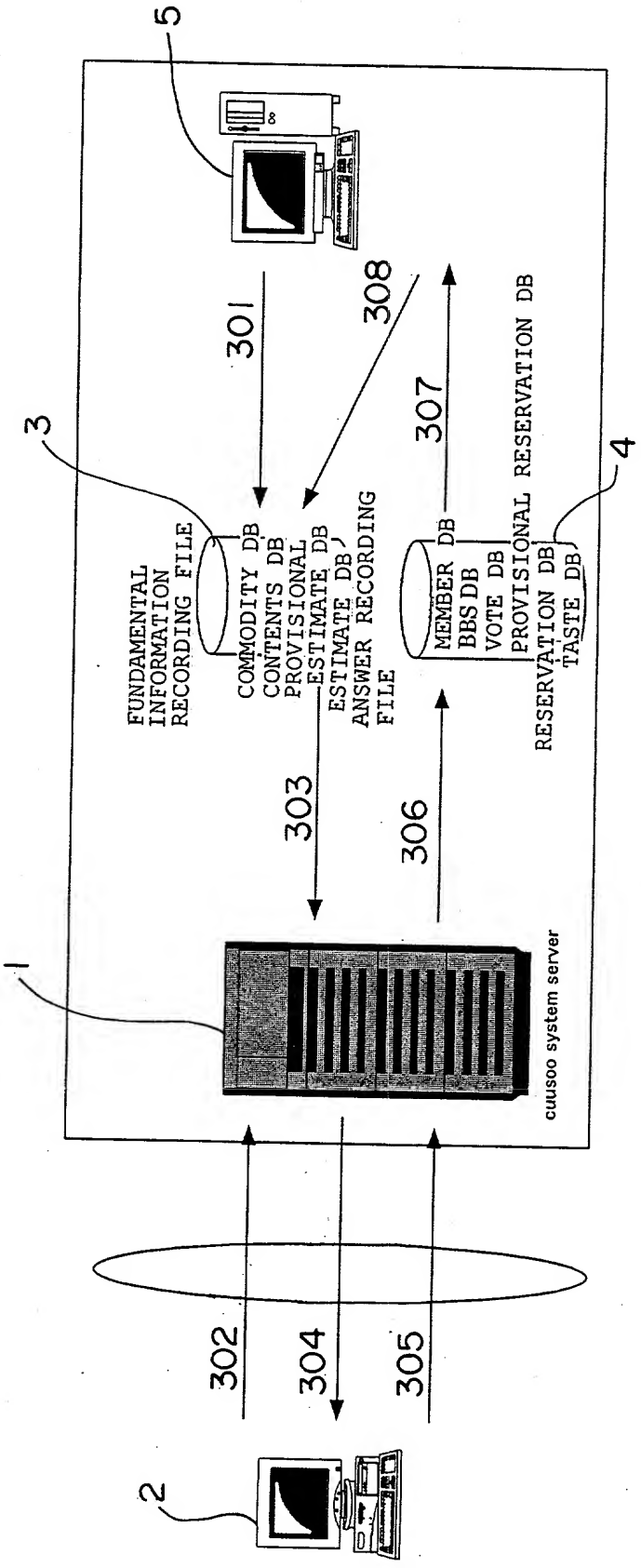

5
301
308
307
3
4
FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION RECORDING FILE
COMMODITY DB
CONTENTS DB
PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE DB
ESTIMATE DB
ANSWER RECORDING FILE
MEMBER DB
BBS DB
VOTE DB
PROVISIONAL RESERVATION DB
RESERVATION DB
TASTE DB
303
306
1
cuusoo system server
302
304
305
2

FIG. 3

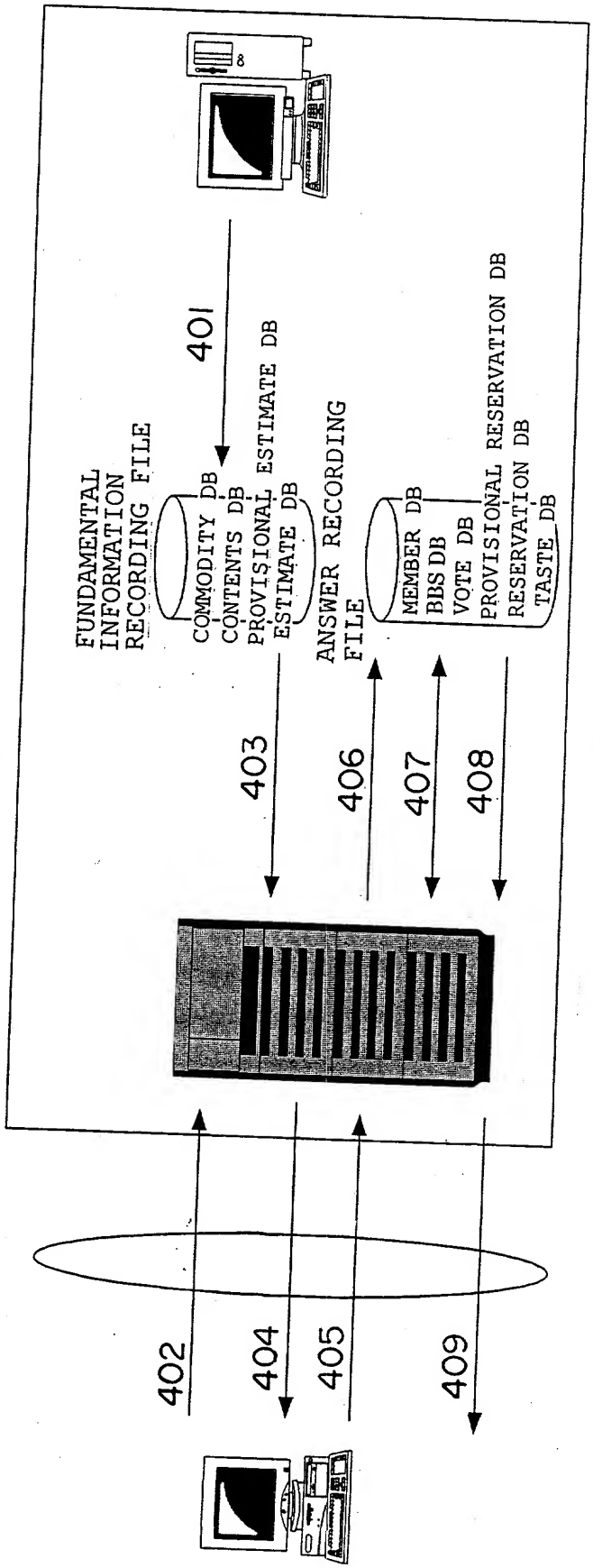

401
FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION RECORDING FILE
COMMODITY DB
CONTENTS DB
PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE DB
ESTIMATE DB
ANSWER RECORDING FILE
MEMBER DB
BBS DB
VOTE DB
PROVISIONAL RESERVATION DB
RESERVATION DB
TASTE DB
403
406
407
408
402
404
405
409

FIG. 4

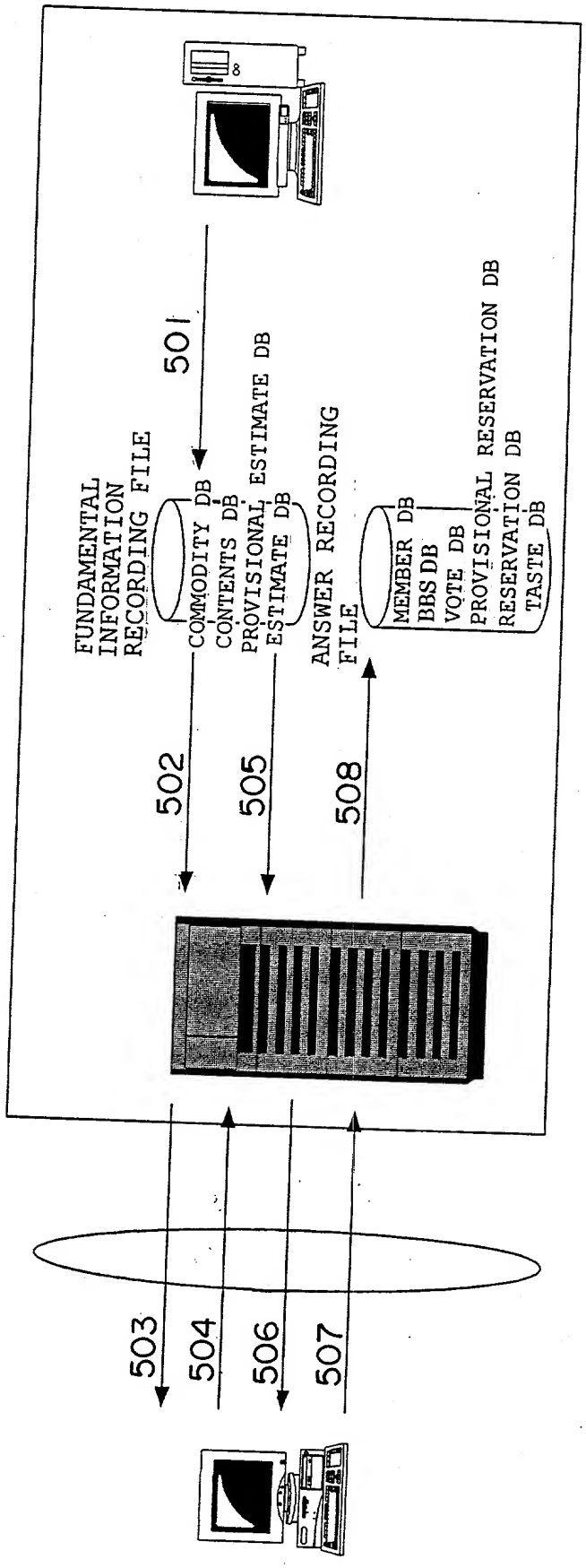

501
FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION RECORDING FILE
COMMODITY DB
CONTENTS DB
PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE DB
ESTIMATE DB
ANSWER RECORDING FILE
MEMBER DB
BBS DB
VOTE DB
PROVISIONAL RESERVATION DB
RESERVATION DB
TASTE DB
502
505
508
503
504
506
507

FIG. 5

No	FILE NAME USED IN PATENT APPLICATION	No	ACTUAL DB NAME
1	FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION RECORDING FILE	1	COMMODITY DB
		2	CONTENTS DB
		3	PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE DB
		4	ESTIMATE DB
2	ANSWER RECORDING FILE	1	MEMBER DB
		2	BBS DB
		3	VOTE DB
		4	PROVISIONAL RESERVATION DB
		5	RESERVATION DB
		6	TASTE DB

FIG. 6

JP02/05905 10/070265

No	key	ITEM NAME	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	COMMODITY CODE	int	1, 2
2		COMMODITY DISPLAY CLASSIFICATION CODE	tinyint	0, 1
3		USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0002"
4		COMMODITY CLASSIFICATION CODE	char(3)	"001", "002"
5		ITEM CODE	int	1, 2
6		COMMODITY NAME	varchar(100)	"TPF", "SIZE R"
7		OUTLINE OF COMMODITY	varchar(50)	"TPF", "SIZE R"
8		EXPLANATION OF COMMODITY	varchar(200)	"MD CASE", "palm"
9		COMMODITY INFORMATION html FILE NAME	varchar(100)	"/list/tpf/index.htm", "/list/r5/index.htm"
10		MANUFACTURER CODE	char(10)	"0000000001", "0000000002"
11		MANUFACTURER COMMODITY CODE	varchar(30)	
12		MEDIA CODE	char(10)	"2000007000", "2000005001"
13		BBS GROUP No	int	1, 2
14		ORIGINATOR	varchar(50)	"ICHIRO SUZUKI", "HANAKO YAMADA"
15		ORIGINATOR'S OCCUPATION	varchar(40)	"ARCHITECT", "COPY WRITER"
16		MEDIA LOGO FILE NAME FOR PUBLICATION	varchar(100)	"/image/logo_dn27x27.gif" "/image/logo_luckdas65x24.gif"
17		COMMERCIALIZATION INDEX	real	10.0, 11.0
18		REGISTRATION DATE	smalldatetime	2000-05-10 00:00:00, 2000-05-23 19:00:00
19		REGISTERED USER ID	char(5)	"E0006", "E0007"
20		LAST UPDATE DATE	smalldatetime	2000-05-10 00:00:00, 2000-05-23 19:00:00
21		LAST UPDATED USER ID	char(5)	"E0006", "E0007"

FIG. 7

10/070265

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	CONTENTS ID	int	1, 2
2		PROJECT CODE	char(10)	"C000000001", "C000000002"
3		DISTRIBUTION START DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
4		TERM OF VALIDITY	smalldatetime	2010-03-31 17:00:00, 2010-05-05 00:00:00
5		ARTICLE TITLE	varchar(77)	"top", "login"
6		ARTICLE OUTLINE	varchar(600)	"ＴＰＦ design", "ＴＰＦ plan"
7		ARTICLE html FILE NAME	varchar(100)	"index.htm", "login.htm"
8		ARTICLE html PASS NAME	varchar(100)	"d:¥Inetpub¥wwwroot¥", "_top"
9		ABSOLUTE PASS FROM www ROUTE	varchar(100)	"/contactus/", "/sitemap/"
10		ARTICLE ARRANGEMENT ORDER	tinyint	1, 2
11		WRITER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"
12		ARTICLE CREATION DATE AND TIME	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
13		PRODUCER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"
14		ARTICLE APPROVAL DATE AND TIME	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
15		FLAG OF CONTENTS DEDICATED TO MEMBER	bit	0, 1
16		REGISTRATION DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
17		REGISTERED USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"
18		LAST UPDATE DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
19		LAST UPDATED USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"

FIG. 8

10/03/23

No	key	ITEM NAME	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	CANDIDATE ITEM No	int	1, 2
2	○	BUSINESS CONTACT'S CODE FOR OBTAINING PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE	char(10)	"2000001000", "2000002000"
3	○	PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE No	tinyint	1, 2
4		PROJECT CODE	char(10)	"C000000001", "C000000002"
5		BUSINESS CONTACT'S ESTIMATE No	varchar(20)	"No. 0012345678", "No. 00000112AS"
6		PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
7		TERM OF VALIDITY OF PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
8		SPECIAL NOTE	varchar(500)	"THIS IS A SPECIAL NOTE", "NOTHING PARTICULAR"
9		REGISTRATION DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
10		REGISTERED USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"
11		LAST UPDATE DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
12		LAST UPDATED USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"

FIG. 9

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	COMMODITY CODE	int	1, 2
2	○	BUSINESS CONTACT'S CODE FOR OBTAINING ESTIMATE	char(10)	"2000001000", "2000002000"
3	○	ESTIMATE No	tinyint	1, 2
4		BUSINESS CONTACT'S ESTIMATE No	varchar(20)	"No. 0012345678", "No. 00000112AS"
5		ESTIMATE CREATION DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
6		TERM OF VALIDITY OF ESTIMATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
7		SPECIAL NOTE	varchar(500)	"THIS IS A SPECIAL NOTE", "NOTHING PARTICULAR"
8		AUTOMATIC CALCULATION APPLICATION FLAG	bit	0, 1
9		REGISTRATION DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
10		REGISTERED USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"
11		LAST UPDATE DATE	smalldatetime	2000-04-19 08:00:00, 2000-07-01 07:30:00
12		LAST UPDATED USER ID	char(5)	"E0001", "E0007"

FIG. 10

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	MEMBER ID	char(8)	"00000001","00000002"
2		DELETION FLAG	bit	0,1
3		BUSINESS CONTACT'S CODE	char(10)	"0000000001","2000001000"
4		PASSWORD	varchar(20)	"abcdefg","1234567"
5		MEMBER'S NAME	varchar(50)	"ICHIRO SUZUKI""HANAKO YAMADA"
6		MEMBER'S NAME IN KANA	varchar(50)	"ICHIRO SUZUKI""HANAKO YAMADA"
7		HANDLE NAME	varchar(50)	"ICHIRO","HANAKO"
8		POSTAL CODE	varchar(30)	"167-0051","233-0007"
9		PREFECTURE CLASSIFICATION CODE	tinyint	1,2
10		CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE, AND WARD	varchar(100)	"SUGINAMI-KU, OGIKUBO","KONAN-KU, OOKUBO"
11		HOUSE NUMBER	varchar(100)	"1-6-7","22-303"
12		APARTMENT NAME	varchar(100)	"COSMO Y BUILDING, 6F","OGIKUBO HEIGHTS 404"
13		TELEPHONE NUMBER	varchar(30)	"03-1234-5678","045-123-4567"
14		BIRTH DATE	smalldatetime	1900-11-11 00:00:00, 1976-07-09 00:00:00
15		OCCUPATION CLASSIFICATION CODE	tinyint	1,2
16		OTHER OCCUPATIONS	varchar(60)	"DOCTOR","ACTOR"
17		GENDER	bit	0,1
18		E-MAIL	varchar(60)	"info@xart.co.jp","ino@cuusoo.com"
19		DESIRE TO RECEIVE E-MAIL	bit	0,1
20		KEYWORD1	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
21		KEYWORD2	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
22		KEYWORD3	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
23		KEYWORD4	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
24		KEYWORD5	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
25		KEYWORD6	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
26		KEYWORD7	varchar(20)	"ITALY","'70s"
27		COMMENTS	varchar(60)	"THANK YOU IN ADVANCE","THIS IS A COMMENT"
28		MAIL ADDRESS DISPLAY CLASSIFICATION	bit	0,1
29		RESIDENTIAL AREA DISPLAY CLASSIFICATION	bit	0,1
30		AGE DISPLAY CLASSIFICATION	bit	0,1

FIG. 11

31		TASTE CLASSIFICATION CODE (COI TAG CLASSIFICATION CODE)	int	1, 2
32		TASTE CODE (COI TAG CODE)	int	1, 2
33		REGISTRATION DATE	smalldatetime	2000-05-17 00:00:00, 2000-05-18 00:00:00
34		LAST UPDATE DATE	smalldatetime	2000-05-17 00:00:00, 2000-05-18 00:00:00

FIG. 12

10/076263

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	BBS GROUP No	int	1, 2
2	○	STATEMENT RECORD No	int	1, 2
3		MEMBER ID	char(8)	"00000001", "00000002"
4		PARENT'S STATEMENT RECORD No	int	1, 2
5		STATEMENT DATE AND TIME	datetime	2000-05-20 01:49:35.077
6		MESSAGE TITLE	varchar(77)	"TEST", "I'LL DO MY BEST"
7		MESSAGE BODY	varchar(2000)	"THIS IS TEST", "I'LL DO MY BEST"
8		PASSWORD FOR DELETION OF STATEMENT	varchar(4)	"abcd", "1234"
9		IMAGE FILE NAME	varchar(50)	"ATTACHMENT", "upload"
10		IMAGE FILE EXTENSION	varchar(10)	"gif", "jpg"
11		DATE AND TIME FOR SORTING	datetime	2000-05-20 01:49:35.077

FIG. 13

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	COMMODITY CODE	int	1, 2
2	○	NUMBER OF VOTES CONDUCTED	tynyint	1, 2
3	○	MEMBER ID	char(8)	"00000001", "00000002"
4		VOTE DATE AND TIME	smalldatetime	2000-05-20 01:59:00, 2000-05-23 11:37:00
5		VOTE IP ADDRESS	varchar(30)	"192. 168. 0. 14", "192. 168. 0. 17"

FIG. 14

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	MEMBER ID	char(8)	"00000001", "00000002"
2	○	COMMODITY CODE	int	1, 2
3	○	LOT STATEMENT No	tynyint	1, 2
4		PROVISIONAL RESERVATION DATE AND TIME	smalldatetime	2000-05-31 19:10:00, 2000-06-06 11:50:00
5		NUMBER OF PROVISIONALLY RESERVED UNITS	tynyint	0, 1
6		PROVISIONAL RESERVATION PRICE	money	1980.0000, 3980.0000

FIG. 15

10/050,045

No	key	ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	SAMPLE VALUE
1	○	MEMBER ID	char(8)	"00000001","00000002"
2	○	COMMODITY CODE	int	1,2
3	○	BUSINESS CONTACT'S CODE	char(10)	"2000001000","2000002000"
4	○	COMMODITY MODEL NUMBER	varchar(20)	"CGRO-TYPE1","CGRO-TYPE2"
5		CUSTOMER CLASSIFICATION	tynyint	1,2
6		RESERVATION DATE AND TIME	datetime	2000-06-19 20:07:39.000
7		NUMBER OF UNITS RESERVED	tynyint	1,2
8		COMPANY NAME	varchar(100)	"A Co., Ltd." "B Ltd."
9		COMPANY NAME IN KANA	varchar(100)	"KABUSHIKIGAISYA EI," "YUUGENGAISYA BII"
10		POST NAME 1	varchar(50)	"PLANNING DEPARTMENT", "GENERAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT"
11		POST NAME 2	varchar(50)	"DEVELOPMENT SECTION","PERSONNEL SECTION"
12		JOB TITLE NAME	varchar(25)	"SECTION CHIEF","SUBSECTION CHIEF"
13		FAX NUMBER	varchar(30)	"03-1234-5678","045-1234-5678"
14		MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER	varchar(30)	"090-1234-5678","070-1234-5678"
15		DESTINATION FLAG	int	1,2
16		PAYMENT METHOD	tynyint	1,2
17		DESTINATION (POSTAL CODE)	varchar(30)	"167-0051","233-0041"
18		DESTINATION (PREFECTURE)	tynyint	1,2
19		DESTINATION (CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE, AND WARD)	varchar(100)	"SUGINAMI-KU, OGIKUBO", "HONMOKU-KU, YAMASHITA-CYO"

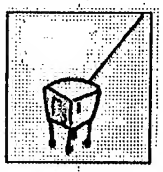
FIG. 16

20		DESTINATION (HOUSE NUMBER)	varchar(100)	"1-6-7","123"
21		DESTINATION (APARTMENT)	varchar(100)	"COSMO Y BUILDING, 6F","OGIKUBO HEIGHTS, 404"
22		DESTINATION (TELEPHONE NUMBER)	varchar(30)	"03-1334-5678","045-123-5678"
23		INPUTTED NAME OF BUSINESS CONTACT	varchar(50)	"ICHIRO SUZUKI","HANAKO YAMADA"
24		INPUTTED NAME IN KANA OF BUSINESS CONTACT	varchar(50)	"ICHIRO SUZUKI","HANAKO YAMADA"
25		INPUTTED e-mail OF BUSINESS CONTACT	varchar(60)	"info@xart.co.jp","ino@cuusoo.com"
26		REMARKS	varchar(500)	"THIS IS A REMARK","NOTHING PARTICULAR"

FIG. 17

VOTE DEADLINE = 2000/06/08 08:59:00

※VOTE AFTER DEADLINE WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE NEXT VOTE RESULT



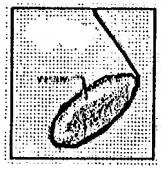
Erty NO. 01

DESK PET

0

VOTE

A WHITE BOX LIKE TOFU HAVING LEGS WITH SMALL TIRES. ALTHOUGH INORGANIC AND FUNCTIONAL PARTS ARE USED, THE APPEARANCE GIVES A LIVELY IMPRESSION IN SOME WAY. A SMALL PET ON A DESK.



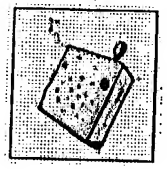
Erty NO. 02

SPINDLE

0

VOTE

THIS HAS A SPINDLE SHAPE LIKE AN ALMOND MADE OF PRESSED ALUMINUM. IT IS JOYFUL TO SEE A STATE WHERE THE ROUNDED SHAPE SWINGS AND TILTS ON A DESK. THERE IS GIVEN METALLIC COLOR THROUGH ANODIZED ALUMINUM PROCESSING TO GIVE FUTURE-LIKE IMAGE.



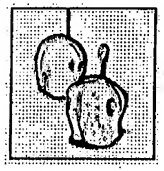
Erty NO. 03

Square Fizz

0

VOTE

THIS HAS A RELAXED AND CLEAR IMPRESSION AND IT IS JOYFUL TO SHOW OFF. THIS HAS A DESIGN WITH A SOMEWHAT RACY TASTE AND CAPTURES YOU. HOW ABOUT FLAVOR OF "FIZZ"?



Erty NO. 04

Aqua Fizz

0

VOTE

THIS IS CHARMING SOMEWHERE AS WELL AS OBEDIENT, AND GIVES IMPRESSION AS IF IT WILL BE INSTANTLY ATTACHED TO ANYONE LIKE A PARTNER. THIS HAS A DESIGN GIVING AN IMPRESSION AS IF IT WILL TELL YOU, "HI, LET'S SPEND TODAY CHEERFULLY".

FIG. 18

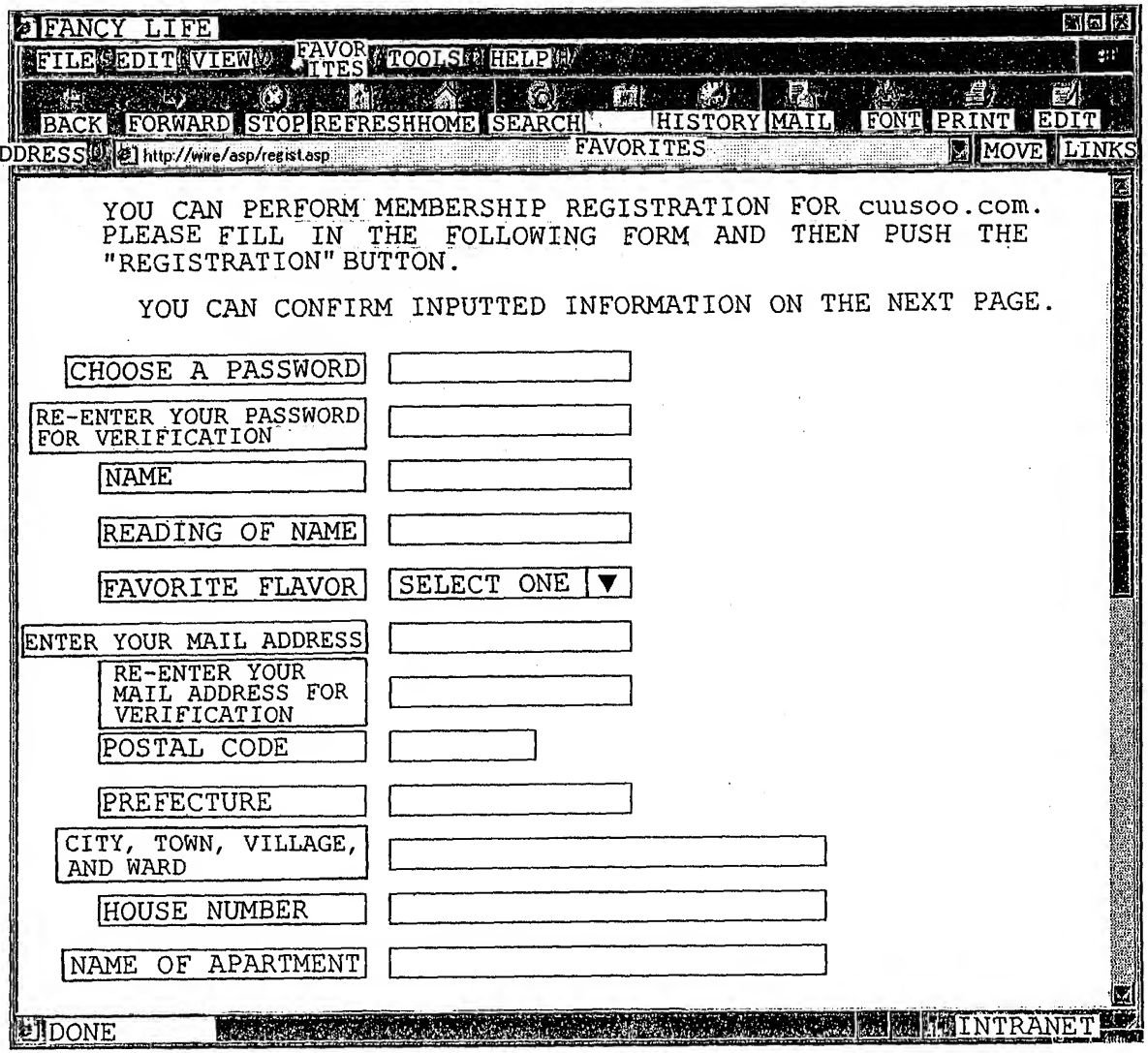

FANCY LIFE
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH HISTORY MAIL FONT PRINT EDIT
ADDRESS http://wire/asp/regist.asp FAVORITES MOVE LINKS
YOU CAN PERFORM MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FOR cuusoo.com.
PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING FORM AND THEN PUSH THE "REGISTRATION" BUTTON.
YOU CAN CONFIRM INPUTTED INFORMATION ON THE NEXT PAGE.
CHOOSE A PASSWORD
RE-ENTER YOUR PASSWORD FOR VERIFICATION
NAME
READING OF NAME
FAVORITE FLAVOR
SELECT ONE
ENTER YOUR MAIL ADDRESS
RE-ENTER YOUR MAIL ADDRESS FOR VERIFICATION
POSTAL CODE
PREFECTURE
CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE, AND WARD
HOUSE NUMBER
NAME OF APARTMENT
DONE
INTRANET

FIG. 19

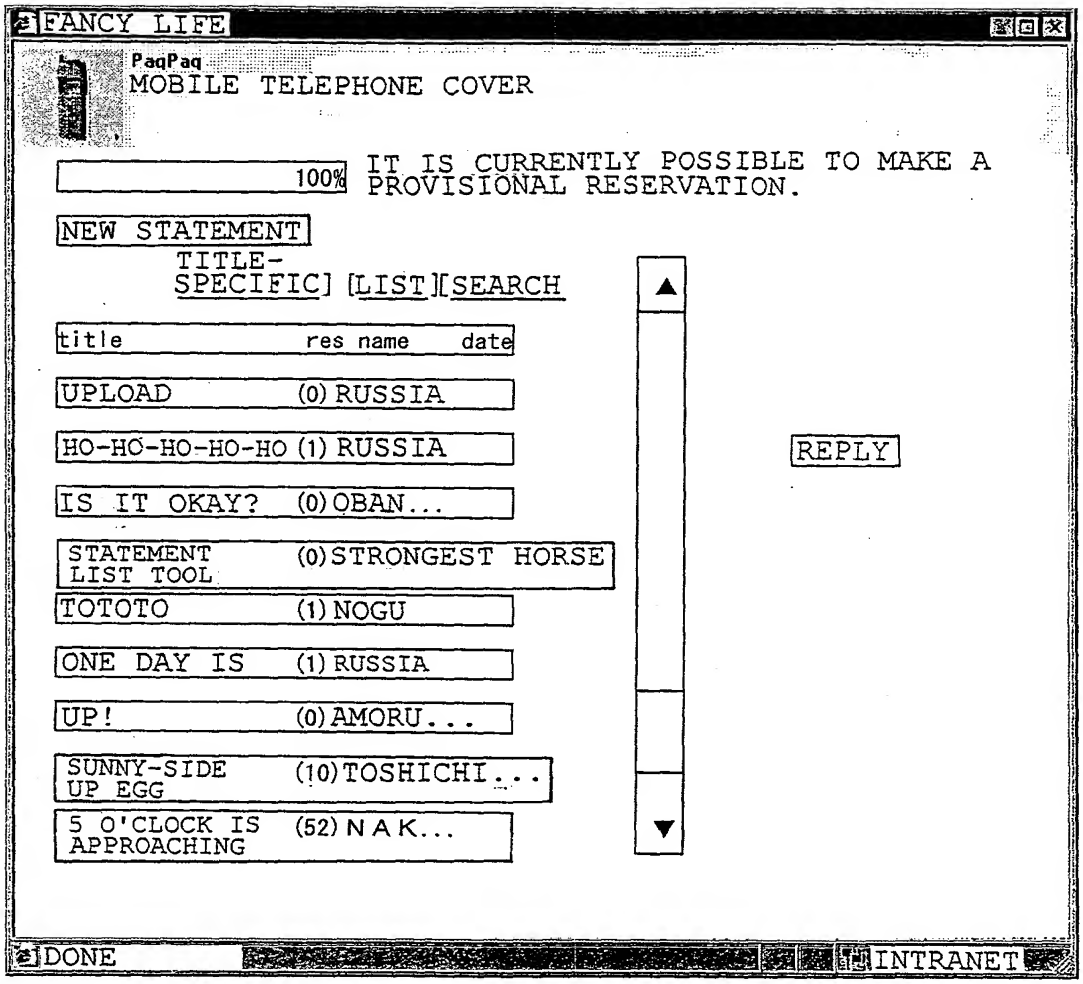


FIG. 20

JP02/02502

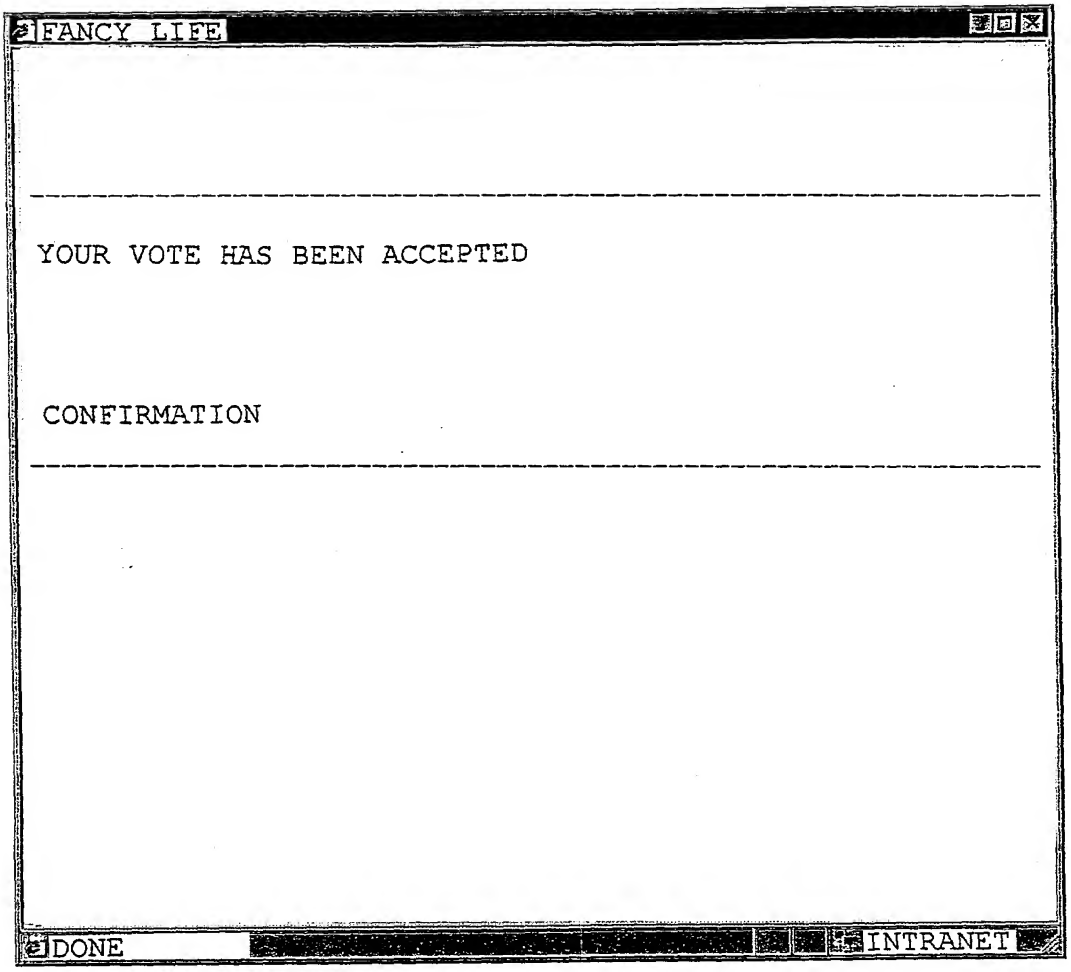


FIG. 21

070265 • 022502

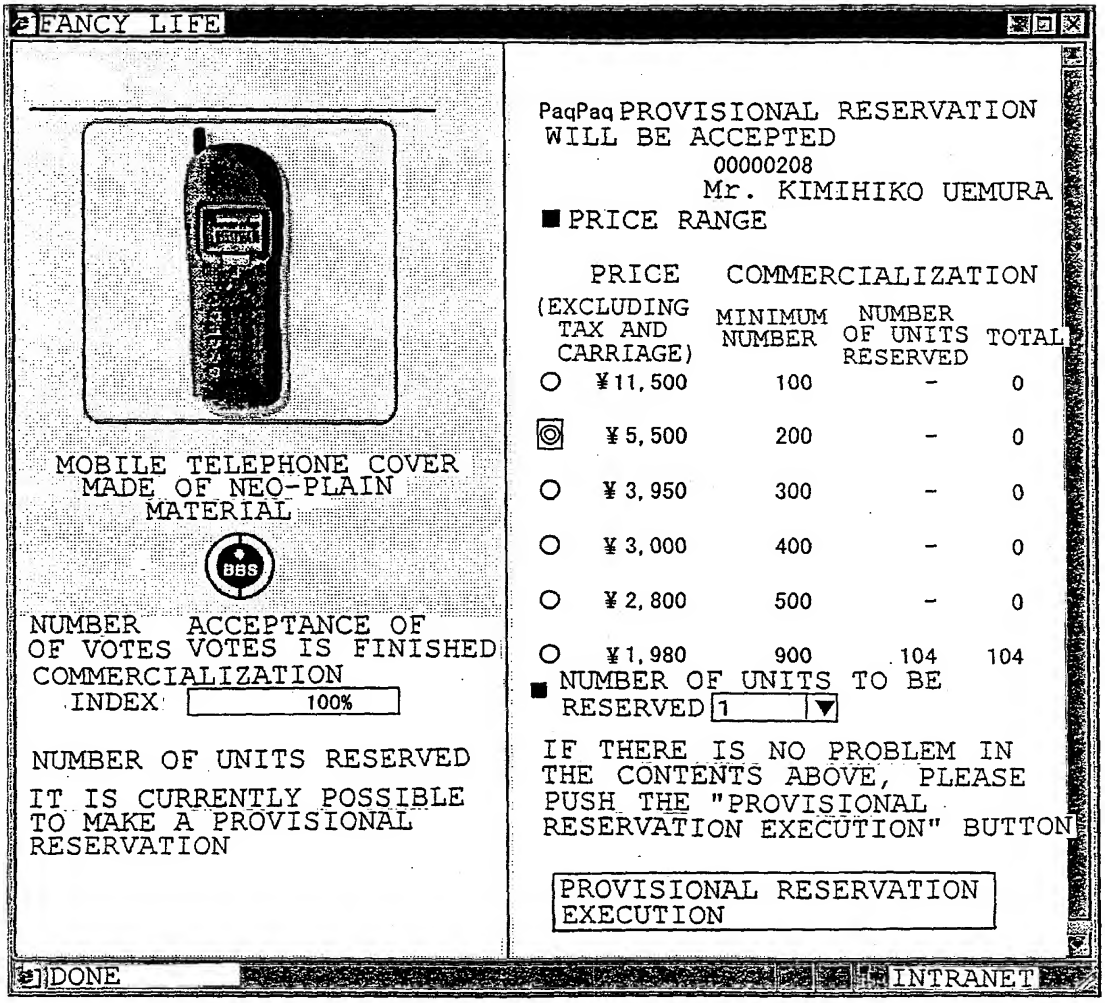


FIG. 22

09/22/2004 15:20 [illegible]

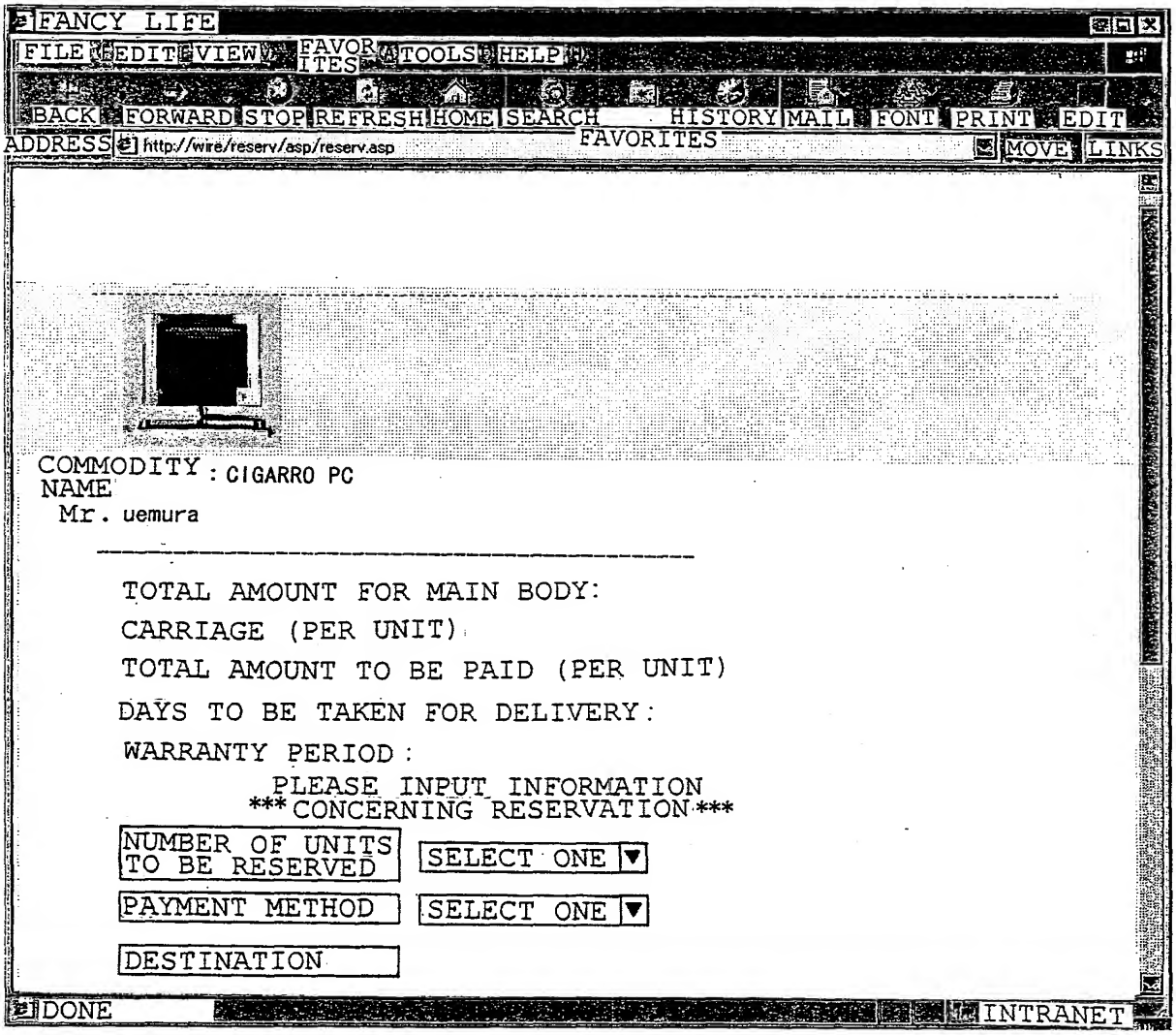

FANCY LIFE
FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH HISTORY MAIL FONT PRINT EDIT
ADDRESS http://wire/reserv/asp/reserv.asp
FAVORITES
MOVE LINKS
COMMODITY NAME : CIGARRO PC
Mr. uemura
TOTAL AMOUNT FOR MAIN BODY:
CARRIAGE (PER UNIT)
TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE PAID (PER UNIT)
DAYS TO BE TAKEN FOR DELIVERY:
WARRANTY PERIOD :
PLEASE INPUT INFORMATION
CONCERNING RESERVATION
NUMBER OF UNITS TO BE RESERVED
SELECT ONE
PAYMENT METHOD
SELECT ONE
DESTINATION
DONE
INTRANET

FIG. 23

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY - USA PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is

sought on the invention entitled SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS AND RELATED CUSTOMER INFORMATION

the specification of which:

(a) ∘ is attached hereto; or

(b) ∘ was filed on _____ as Application No. _____ or Express Mail No., as Application No. not yet known _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable); or

(c) ∘ was described and claimed in PCT International Application No. PCT/JP 00/05751 filed on August 25, 2000 and as amended under PCT Article 19 on _____ (if any) and/or under PCT Article 34 on _____ (if any).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above;

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56;

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent, design or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) listed below and have also identified below any foreign application(s) for patent, design or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed for the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

COUNTRY (OR INDICATE IF PCT)	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING (day, month, year)	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 37 U.S.C. § 119
Japan	11-239502	26/08/1999	∘ YES NO ∘
			∘ YES NO ∘
			∘ YES NO ∘
			∘ YES NO ∘

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below, and insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior

United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56, which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Prior U.S.A. Application(s)

Application No.: _____ Filing Date: _____ Status: _____

POWER OF ATTORNEY: I hereby appoint the registrants of Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear, LLP, 620 Newport Center Drive, Sixteenth Floor, Newport Beach, California 92660, Telephone (949) 760-0404, Customer No. 20,995.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful, false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole or first inventor: Kohei NISHIYAMA

Inventor's signature _____ Day 19th Month Feb Year 2002

Residence (city and country): Matsudo, Japan JPX

Citizenship: Japanese

Post Office Address: 259-40, Otaniguchi, Matsudo-shi, Chiba 270-0005, Japan

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Customer No. 20,995
PF-33